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**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

Please amend claims 1, 4, 5, 6-9, 10, and 14 as set forth below:

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1. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A fingerprint collating device for collating a user's fingerprint with registered fingerprint information to effect personal authentication, said device comprising:

an external computer;

a ~~fingerprint reader~~ prism for reading said fingerprint to create read fingerprint information, and to create read history information indicating that said read fingerprint information has been created;

a read history storage for storing said read history information and executing a control program when instructed by the external computer; ~~and~~

a controller for setting a fingerprint accepting flag associated with said read fingerprint information indicating that read fingerprint information is normally produced through said prism; and

a collator collating said read fingerprint information with said registered fingerprint information to effect personal authentication and output a result of authentication when said fingerprint accepting flag is set, said read history information is stored in said read history storage, and the control program is executed.

2. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The fingerprint collating device according to claim 1,

wherein said collator effects said personal authentication by using said registered fingerprint information supplied from an external storage medium, wherein said registered finger print information includes a finger print template that corresponds to an owner of the external storage medium.

3. (ORIGINAL) The fingerprint collating device according to claim 1 further comprising:

registered fingerprint information storage for storing said registered fingerprint information, in which said collator effects said personal authentication by using said registered fingerprint information stored in said registered fingerprint information storage.

4. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A fingerprint collating method for collating a user's fingerprint with registered fingerprint information to effect personal authentication, said method comprising the steps of:

reading said fingerprint through a prism to create read fingerprint information, and to create read history information indicating that said read fingerprint information has been created;

storing said read history information in read history storing means; ~~and~~  
setting a fingerprint accepting flag associated with said read fingerprint information indicating that read fingerprint information is normally produced through the prism; and

executing a control program in said read history storage means when an instruction signal is received from an external computer; and

collating said read fingerprint information with said registered fingerprint information to effect personal authentication and output a result of authentication when said fingerprint accepting flag is set, said read history information is stored in said read history storing means, and said read history storage means executes the control program.

5. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A fingerprint collating system comprising:

means for generating a collation instruction and an index number;  
means for illuminating a bottom face of a prism based on the collation instruction;

means for generating a fingerprint image of a user when an air layer exists between a finger of a user and a top face of the prism;

means for setting a fingerprint accepting flag in a first memory unit when ~~the user's fingerprint is accepted to produce~~ a fingerprint image of the user is normally produced through the prism;

means for reading a fingerprint template associated with the index number from a second memory unit; and

means for collating the fingerprint image and the fingerprint template when the fingerprint image of the user is generated and the fingerprint accepting flag is set.

6. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The ~~method~~system of claim 5, further comprising:

means for converting the fingerprint image to a digital signal.

7. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The ~~method~~system of claim 5, further comprising:

means for resetting the fingerprint accepting flag when the collation between the fingerprint image and the fingerprint template has been completed.

8. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The ~~method~~system of claim 5, further comprising:

means for outputting a result of the collation to the personal computer.

9. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) The ~~method~~system of claim 5, wherein the second memory unit is an IC card.

10. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A method for collating a fingerprint in a fingerprint collating system that includes a personal computer and a collating unit, the method comprising:

generating a collation instruction and an index number;

illuminating a bottom face of a prism based on the collation instruction;

generating a fingerprint image of a user when an air layer exists between a finger of a user and a top face of the prism;

setting a fingerprint accepting flag in a first memory unit when ~~the user's fingerprint is accepted to produce a fingerprint image~~ is normally produced through the prism;

reading a fingerprint template associated with the index number from a second memory unit; and

collating the fingerprint image and the fingerprint template when the fingerprint image of the user is generated and the fingerprint accepting flag is set.

11. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method of claim 10, further comprising:

converting the fingerprint image to a digital signal.

D 12. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method of claim 10, further comprising:

resetting the fingerprint accepting flag when the collation between the fingerprint image and the fingerprint template is complete.

13. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The method of claim 10, further comprising:

outputting a result of the collation to the computer.

14. (CURRENTLY AMENDED) A system for collating a fingerprint of a user, comprising:

a computer that generates a fingerprint collation instruction and an index number, wherein the computer has a first memory unit;

a prism that generates a fingerprint image of a user when the collation instruction is received from the computer and an air layer exists between a portion a finger of the user and a top face of the prism; and

a collating unit that retrieves a fingerprint template of the user from a second memory unit based on the index number and collates the fingerprint image of the user with the fingerprint template when a fingerprint accepting flag is set in the first memory unit, wherein the fingerprint accepting flag is set when ~~the user's fingerprint is accepted to produce~~ a fingerprint image is normally produced through the prism.

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15. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The system of claim 14, wherein the fingerprint accepting flag is set when the fingerprint image is generated

16. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The system of claim 14, wherein the fingerprint accepting flag is reset when the collation of the fingerprint image and the fingerprint template is complete.

17. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The system of claim 14, wherein the collating unit sends the collation result to the computer.

18. (PREVIOUSLY PRESENTED) The system of claim 14, wherein the second memory unit is an IC card.

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